

## Group Discussion Guide: With Jesus at the Beginning | December 5, 2021

### Begin with prayer (10 minutes).

As you begin, read **Luke 1:68-79**. Once finished, pray to open your time together.

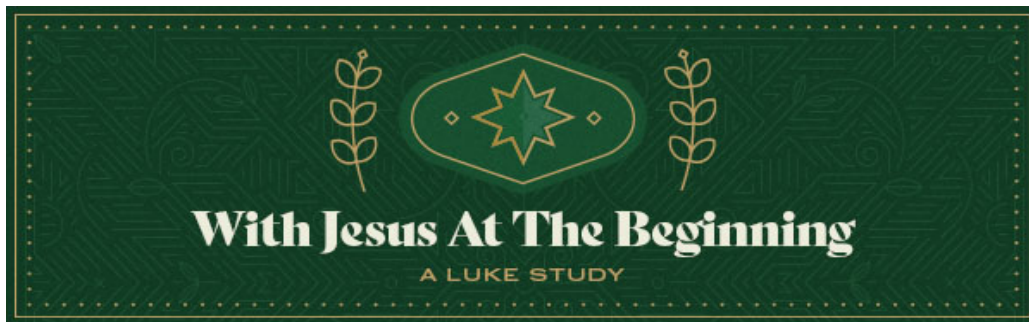
### Discuss your hopes for this series (10 minutes).

- As we heard this weekend, we're going to spend extended time in the Gospel of Luke so that, by doing so, we spend extended time with Jesus. What are you looking forward to from this series?
- Do you have any hopes for your own spiritual walk that you think diving deep into the life and teachings of Jesus might help you grow in? What are they?
- Do you have any doubts, hesitations, or questions pertaining to a series like this?

### Split into three or four mini-groups for Scripture and reflection (25 minutes).

In this message, Emerson talked about **Luke 1**. Take some time to debrief the following Scriptures and questions:

- **Read Luke 1:1-4.** This wasn't mentioned in the sermon, but who was Luke writing to? Why was he writing this gospel account? How does the fact that Luke interviewed "eyewitnesses" lend credibility to the story he's about to share? What other significant words or phrases are used in Luke's opening that would be important to highlight?
- **Read Luke 1:5-25.** What do you learn from these verses about who Zechariah and Elizabeth are? What do you learn about John the Baptist? Have someone paraphrase the events that unfold here in this text.
- **Read Luke 1:57-89.** Again, have someone paraphrase what transpires in these verses.
  - In **verses 68-75**, Zechariah prophesies about Jesus. What specific words and phrases does he use and what do they tell you about his work and ministry?
  - In **verses 76-77**, Zechariah prophesies about John the Baptist. What specific words and phrases does he use and what do they tell you about his work and ministry?
  - In **verses 78-79**, Zechariah tells us about the character and plans of God. What specifically does he tell us about God's character and God's plans here?



After your allotted mini-group time is finished, have everyone circle back up in one big group to share insights.

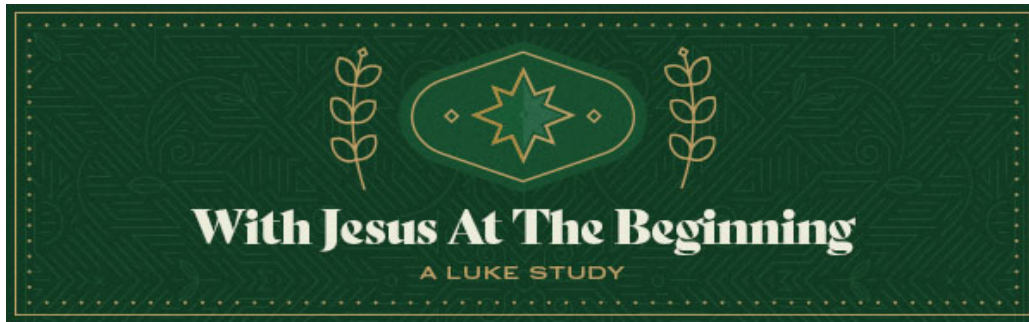
**Go over the sermon, sharing your thoughts and insights (30 minutes).**

- How did your group discussions go? What sorts of things rose to the surface from those conversations?
- How did this sermon about **Luke 1** challenge you? What resonated with you?
- In his sermon, Emerson talked about living with darkness and disappointment. Where or in what ways do you experience these in your own life? How did Zechariah experience darkness and disappointment in his?
- In this message, Emerson also talked about how God meets us in our darkness. Do you agree or disagree? When have you seen this to be true in your own life? What does it look like to experience God's Presence in a dark season?
- As Christians, we live with tension. We have tension knowing that God has triumphed over the darkness, but the darkness is not yet fully dispelled. What would it look like for you to live in light of God's triumph over the darkness both on good days and bad?
- Emerson also talked about how, despite the darkness, God calls us to live in the light. When times get rough, in what ways are you prone to "giving in" to the darkness? How does sin seep into your life when life gets hard? How might God be inviting you to live in the light despite the darkness?
- Read **Romans 13:11-14**. How else might you practically live "as in the daytime" according to this passage?
- How can your life group support you in seasons of darkness or disappointment?

**Split into gendered accountability groups (25 minutes).**

Throughout this series, we'll create space each week to have accountability with one another. This will provide each person a more intimate and hopefully safer space to share where they might struggle. Here are a few questions to guide this time after you split out from one another:

- In what ways have you recently experienced darkness that you weren't able to share with the whole group?
- In what ways has this caused you to sin that you need to confess?
- How is your relationship with God these days?
- How can this group pray for you right now?



Finish by praying over and for one another.

**Come back as a large group and finish with intercessory prayer (10 minutes).**

Like each week, finish your group session with prayer. You might designate someone in your group to write down everyone's prayer requests and then send them to the whole group for everyone to be praying about through the week.

- What is on your heart that you need prayer for?
- Who in your life needs prayer?

Have someone close in prayer.